Reviewer's report

Title: Successful reduction of hospital-acquired methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus in a urology ward: a 10-year study

Version: 2 Date: 14 May 2013

Reviewer: Debra E. Irwin

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Major Compulsory Revisions
This is a well-designed study describing the impact of a stepwise infection control strategy to eradicate hospital-acquired methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).

Methods Section – Statistical Analysis: The incidence rate is expressed as the ‘annual number of cases per 1000 patient years’. The authors should add a sentence that explains how patient-years were derived. Is it derived from length of stay in hospital?

The Poisson regression model needs more explanation. For example, the independent variable ‘years of diagnosis’ – do you mean the actual year of diagnosis for each case or something else? How is ‘number of patient days at risk’ defined? Is it the length of stay in hospital or something else? The dependent variable is described as ‘the number of MRSA cases’ – is it truly the total number of cases?

Seems like some of the results could be due to unmeasured confounders. Was there any other data collected on the patients? Would it be possible to create a table that shows simple demographic and clinical data (eg: surgery type or infection control strategy, etc....) on all of the MRSA cases and non-cases during this time? If so, this table should be added and some of those variables may be relevant to put in the models. If not, this fact should be clearly stated and acknowledged as a limitation.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

No conflict of interest.